

**MEDIA EDUCATION AND NATION-BUILDING:
A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTION OF
MEDIA PROGRAMME INSTRUCTORS IN
TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN COLLEGE**

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TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN COLLEGE**

by

LIM JEW KIM

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for the degree of
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory to my father

Lim Hong Kiang
(1942-2016)

for his gentle spirit, patience and belief in education

and to my mother

Tan Eng Jong

for her unfailing support and belief in education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

Astro	All-Asian Satellite Television and Radio Operator
AUKU 1971	<i>Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti 1971</i> / Universities and University Colleges Act 1971
BCA	British Colonial Administration
COHECS	Council for Heads of Communication Studies
DAP	Democratic Action Party
FMS	Federated Malay States
IHE	Institutions of Higher Education
IPTA	<i>Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam</i> / Public Higher Educational Institutions
IPTS	<i>Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Swasta</i> / Private Higher Educational Institutions
ITM	Institut Teknologi Mara
LAN	<i>Lembaga Akreditasi Negara</i> / National Accreditation Board
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
NEP	New Economic Policy
PHEI	Private Higher Educational Institutions
PRDC	Programme Review Development Committee
SBS	School of Business Studies
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i> / Malaysian Certificate of Education
SS	Straits Settlements

STPM	<i>Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia</i> / Malaysia Higher School Certificate
TAR College	Tunku Abdul Rahman College
TITAS	<i>Tamadun Islam dan Tamadun Asia</i> / Asian and Islamic Civilisation
UiTM	Universiti Teknologi Mara
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UM	University of Malaya
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UMS	Unfederated Malay States
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPM	Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, later Universiti Putra Malaysia
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
UUM	Universiti Utara Malaysia

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**PENGAJIAN MEDIA DAN PEMBINAAN NEGARA: SATU KAJIAN KES
TERHADAP PERSEPSI TENAGA PENGAJAR PROGRAM MEDIA DI
KOLEJ TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menganalisis and menilai pengalaman tenaga pengajar media terhadap proses pembinaan-negara dan pendidikan media di instituti pengajian tinggi awam yang didominasi oleh pelajar Cina. Pengajar media di Kolej TAR Kuala Lumpur telah disoalselidik dan teori konflik telah digunakan sebagai asas kajian ini. Kajian ini dilaksanakan kerana kekurangan ulasan dan dapatan kajian yang mengambilkira ketidaksamaan sosial dalam memahami pendidikan media, pengajar media dan pembinaan-negara. Tiga persoalan kajian yang telah dibentuk iaitu bagaimanakah pengajar media menerangkan pendidikan media dan pembinaan-negara, apakah andaian mereka terhadap pembinaan-negara dan pendidikan media di institusi yang didominasi oleh pelajar Cina, dan bagaimanakah teori konflik menjelaskan pendapat dan andaian mereka. Melalui sesi temubual, pendapat dan persepsi 19 pengajar media telah dikaji. Hasil pembelajaran kursus, soalan-soalan peperiksaan, pendapat daripada pengamal industri, pegawai kolej dan pelajar juga telah dikaji untuk memperkukuhkan maklumat yang dikumpul. Kajian ini mendapati pengajar media menggambarkan pendidikan media pada tahap praktikal dan pelajar dididik berdasarkan kemahiran yang diperlukan dalam bidang pengkhususan mereka agar mereka boleh mendapat pekerjaan selepas tamat pengajian. Pengajar media melihat pembinaan-negara sebagai asas perpaduan dan pembentukan semangat kekitaan terhadap negara Malaysia. Pengajar media berpendapat kekurangan pengetahuan pelajar berbangsa Cina terhadap budaya orang bukan Cina adalah membimbangkan dan ia mungkin akan membawa masalah di kemudian hari apabila

pelajar-pelajar tersebut mulai bekerja. Pengajar media juga berpendapat Kolej TAR masih tidak sesuai untuk tujuan pembinaan-negara kerana bilangan pelajar Cina yang tinggi. Semua kebimbangan pengajar media ini kerap kali dikaitkan dengan peluang pekerjaan pelajar pada masa depan. Berdasarkan teori konflik, pengajar media adalah lebih peka terhadap ideologi pihak pentadbir negara yang menggalakkan dominasi Melayu dalam pembinaan-negara berbanding dengan kesedaran ideologi pemain industri media. Beberapa pengajar media akan mengetengahkan ideologi pihak pentadbir negara kepada pelajar dalam pengajaran mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, pengajar media ini menggunakan pendirian yang neutral semasa perbincangan dalam kelas. Pada masa yang sama, pengajar media menggalakkan ideologi pengamal media. Kemahiran praktikal digalakkan secara langsung tetapi sifat-sifat dan sikap yang dikehendaki oleh pengamal industri pula digalakkan secara tidak langsung. Kajian ini mendapati terdapat percanggahan dengan teori konflik yang mengandaikan kumpulan subordinat tidak akan bebas daripada dominasi kumpulan setelah menerima ideologi kumpulan dominan. Kajian ini juga mendapati segelintir pengajar media yang sedar akan ideologi pihak pentadbir negara tetapi memilih untuk berdiam diri. Sehubungan dengan teori konflik, hasil kajian ini membayangkan yang ekonomi dan kehidupan semasa dalam sistem ekonomi kapitalis telah menjadi faktor penentu dalam penerangan dan pemahaman isu-isu pendidikan media dan pembinaan-negara.

**MEDIA EDUCATION AND NATION-BUILDING: A CASE STUDY OF THE
PERCEPTION OF MEDIA PROGRAMME INSTRUCTORS IN TUNKU
ABDUL RAHMAN COLLEGE**

ABSTRACT

This study analysed and evaluated the experience of media instructors on nation-building and teaching media related programmes in a public tertiary institution that was dominated by Chinese students. Media instructors in TAR College Kuala Lumpur were examined and conflict theory was used to guide this study. This study was motivated by the lack of reviews that considered social inequalities in the understanding of media education, media instructors and nation-building. Three research questions were formed to lead this study; how the media instructors describe media education and nation-building, what assumptions that they hold about nation-building and teaching media related programmes in Chinese dominated institutions, and how conflict theory explained their opinions and assumptions. Via semi-structured in-depth interview, opinions and perceptions of the 19 instructors were analysed. Programmes learning outcomes, final examination questions, opinions from industry players, college officials and students were also reviewed to triangulate the information collected. The study found that instructors described media education at a practical level where students should be taught specific skills and knowledge in order to obtain jobs upon graduation. As for nation-building, instructors perceived it as unity and formation of the sense of belonging towards the country. Instructors were concerned on the lack of knowledge of the Chinese students on cultures of the non-Chinese as this could lead to complications later in their working life. Instructors also felt that TAR College had yet to be a good environment for nation-building ideal to take place due to its extreme composition of

Chinese students. Instructors' worries were often connected to students' careers in the future. Based on conflict theory, instructors were sensitive towards the ideology of the State in promoting Malay-Bumiputera dominance in the process of nation-building, but lacked awareness on the ideology of media industry players. Instructors would highlight the ideology of the State to the students but remain impartial during the lessons. On the other hand, instructors promoted the ideology of the media industry players. The practical skills knowledge was promoted directly but the attributes and attitudes desired by the media industry players were promoted more subtly. This study noted discrepancies in the assumption of conflict theory that assumed subordinate groups were unable to escape from the subordination of the dominant groups due to the acceptance of dominant groups' ideology. This study came to understand that there were times where instructors were aware of the ideology of the State but make a conscious choice to put such awareness into silence. In relation to conflict theory, the findings of this study implied that economy and survival in the capitalist economic system had become the determining factors in explaining and understanding issues pertaining to media education and nation-building.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The success of a nation depends on the quality of its citizens and the education that is available. Without proper education, the citizens might not have the required knowledge that is important for decision-making purposes. This is important as the development of a nation depends on the rationality and timely decisions made by the citizens. In a pluralistic society, education is one of the most important devices for nation-building. This is because education can be designed to improve the character and service delivery of instructors, students and the citizenry (Amali and Jekayinfa 2013, p.141). Proper education planning would allow the students to have the necessary thoughts and perceptions that would be helpful in the effort to build a nation. Following this, the quality of the instructors is crucial as instructors have great influence over the quality of the education (Manoranjan 2014). At the tertiary level, students receive education to enhance their knowledge and skills in specific areas and at the same time learn the norms and values necessary to be upright citizens. The direct and indirect knowledge that the students receive have a lot to do with the knowledge that the instructors of the programmes have (Ball, Thames and Phelps 2008). In the context of media education, media instructors are dealing with more than just media knowledge and skills made available to the students. The media, the core of media education, are able to reach a vast amount of audience in a short period of time and its content has the ability to educate the audience in various ways. At the same time, the media system also operates within a specific social, cultural, economic and political environment. In a developing nation, the media play an important role in nation-building.

In most developing societies, the role and functions of the mass media are tied closely to the needs of the government and the people. Oftentimes, the media

acts as a natural conduit that helps disseminate important messages aimed for national development and nation-building. The fact that the governments of these nations use the mass media continuously in their development plans and strategies shows its potential in facilitating development efforts (Faridah, Chang and Kuik 2012, p.1).

Therefore, the perceptions and opinions of the instructors on media and the environment the media are operating has great influence over what and how media instructors would handle a media programme. The understating of this relationship; media instructors, the media and the context the media are operating, can be beneficial for the overall understanding of the development effort in Malaysia, especially in terms of nation-building.

1.1 Background

The media have been perceived as powerful in their assumed ability to reach and change public's attitudes and behaviours (Pisal 2005, p.339). These abilities allow users of the media to reach a vast amount of people in a very short period of time while reduces the geographical distance among the people. In the context of nation-building, the roles of the media become more significant as the number of communication increases. Media monitor and inform the public of the progress and development of the State and social institutions, and this is essential for democracy and nation-building. Important information and issues need to be widely discussed by the decision makers and the public before a final decision is made. In other words, communication should happen both ways. With this, the public should be equipped with necessary knowledge so that they can participate in meaningful discussion. The media can be helpful as it can ensure necessary knowledge and information reach the public in a short amount of time and in the form suitable for the public. These views are stressed by researchers like Schramm (1964), Lerner (1958), and Rogers (1983). They perceive the importance of media as agents of

development, mobility, and change. To accelerate the required attitude towards development and nation-building in the public, the media could ensure that necessary knowledge and information reach the general public (Schramm 1964, pp.25-29). Thus, media are vital for the transformation of political culture (Shakila 2006, p.39) and problems that occur in the society can be resolved with more and better-informed public. These opinions and perceptions on the importance of media in national development and nation-building have strongly influenced many developing countries (Mustafa 2005b, p.27). Although media cannot resolve any problems directly, greater problems can occur if the media content is not properly managed. In Malaysia, the media are crucial in supporting the government's objectives in communicating with the public to accept changes initiated by the government (*The Star*, 20 March 2010; Shakila 2006, p.39). After the May 13, 1969 incident, media are advised to avoid divisive public controversial issues that could spark racial sentiments (Lent 1990, p.56). With the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970, the media are expected to ensure stability in Malaysia and encourage the public into accepting the policy.

In order to ensure that the media function properly for nation-building, well trained and skilled media personnel are vital. Untrained and unskilful media personnel might jeopardise and slow down the process of nation-building. In order for one to fully understand and utilise the media for nation-building, the training that one receives is essential. The training can coach future media personnel with all the ins and outs of the media and the various ways in dealing with the vast amount of information and knowledge available. Following this, the syllabus and content of the training are crucial in developing the desired media personnel. Instructors should

design a curriculum that emphasises the central concepts of the disciplines. This is because the rapid changes of knowledge in all disciplines have made many areas unteachable without emphasis on the rules for discovering the nature of the discipline (Hass 1961, p.2). In other words, instructors have to think ahead of time and students need to be taught about technology, problem-solving and self-learning skills. Thus, instructors have great influence over the training of media personnel, and this is done by adopting and creating a curriculum that the instructors deem important.

However, the media, the nation-building process and the training of media personnel do not operate in a vacuum. The media system in Malaysia is not free. Several existing acts restrict the freedom of the media in Malaysia. Some of the major acts include the Printing and Publication Act (1984), Communication and Multimedia Act (1998), Sedition Act (1948) and Official Secrets Act (1972). These acts prevent the media in Malaysia from covering issues that are deemed inappropriate by the laws and the government (Hem 2014, p.10). At the same time, publishers and printing firms require license to operate and the government can revoke the license at any time (Hem 2014, p.16; Knirsch and Kratzenstein 2010, p.97). Also, the ruling coalition party and those who are close to them own most of the media (SUARAM 2005, p.40). Owing to all these restrictions and conditions, the society suffers as the media are not allowed to perform its functions properly.

Thus, it is so clear that the mass media functions as conduits for disseminating information, which in turn contributes to the development of societies as a whole. When the media are not allowed to function as it should, societies would remain in the darkness of ignorance and be very vulnerable to any forms of abuse. This would be more so if the media role in the system of checks and balances to ensure fair governance of society is not put in place (Mohd. Hamdan 2010).

Also, the nation-building notion ideals, especially in the context of education in Malaysia, are not apolitical. The on-going process of nation-building in Malaysia defines the Malay-Bumiputera as the primary subjects, and this happens especially in education and socio-political process (Md. Shukri et al. 2010). The essence of NEP on tertiary education is no longer concealed public secrets and has been frequently researched and criticised. However, most criticisms only scratch the surface with no specific education discipline or field being studied. Since *Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam* (Public Higher Educational Institutions, IPTA) in Malaysia usually receive monetary support from the State, it is understandable that these IPTA present a partisan slant and biased education. Studies that touch on issues of Bumiputeraism and education have been labelled sensitive and would usually be avoided and discouraged (Joseph 2006, p.155). Thus, most studies on higher education are taken out of context and fail to recognise the impact of Bumiputera issue in Malaysia higher education. Owing to this, understanding on media education and nation-building, while taking Bumiputera issues into consideration, becomes more necessary.

Furthermore, educations at all levels are governed by the State. Institutions of higher education (IHE) in Malaysia have always been assumed to be responsible for producing upright citizens for the State and the necessary workforce for the industry. The State and the industry would usually set a certain benchmark for the education institutions to achieve and media programmes in Malaysia have been shaped to accomplish this requirement (Mustafa 2008, pp.120-121). Under such circumstances, tertiary education no longer retains its autonomy to knowledge in terms of production and criticism. In other words, the monetary funding from the

State means that IPTA would have to adhere to certain rules specified by the State in order to ensure the continuation of the funding. In this case, it means to produce graduates that can contribute significantly to the nation's economy and those who have with them the necessary attitudes to be upright citizens. As for the media industry, the benchmark would have been set at capable employees in terms of their practical skills, theoretical knowledge and the necessary soft skills related to the industry. With recent report on the increasing number of unemployment of graduates, IHE in Malaysia are put into the limelight. The first place to identify the root of the problem is within IHE as it is believed that these institutions have failed to produce the required graduates. At the same time, the State has also perceived that IHE can be a good place for building the desired citizens. Deviant citizens are seen as unproductive to the development of the politics and economy of the nation. So, the State, via the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), has introduced various courses that are perceived would produce the required upright citizens. Courses like *Tamadun Islam dan Tamadun Asia* (Asian and Islamic Civilisation, TITAS), *Hubungan Etnik* (Ethnic Relations), and *Pendidikan Moral* (Moral Studies) are meant to enhance students' knowledge of the different cultures and practices in Malaysia. By this, the State and the industry players have taken the more dominant say in what the students need to learn, know and be able to perform.

Thus, the training of media practitioners is twofold. For the nation-building purpose, the students are trained to be media practitioners who are upright as citizens and are supportive of the State's ideology. For the economic purpose, the students are trained to be productive to the media industry. In order to achieve this, media practitioners are trained to adopt and adapt to the State's ideology and hopefully

these traits would be reflected in their work later. The training coaches media practitioners to manage information in a more effective manner. This act of training media practitioners like journalists, broadcasters, public relations officers etc. is important to keep pace with the fast changing needs and requirements of the people (Sinha 1979, p.2).

The need for popular participation in achieving national development objectives led to the use of new knowledge, methods, and approaches via mass communication by governments and by the private sector. This need led, in turn, to the emergence of new fields of study in communication training programs, designed to meet the skilled manpower requirements of development...it has brought to life the population information specialist, the nutrition information officer, the agrarian information writer, to mention only a few (Feliciano 1976, p.195).

With the necessary training, media practitioners are expected to encourage the development of a conducive learning environment as envisioned by the State. In Malaysia, media education is expected to generate desirable professionals for the media industry. The ability of the State to control part of the curriculum of media education at tertiary level moulds the students into adopting and adapting to the State's ideology, and acknowledges the State's policies as commendable.

The environment in which the process of education takes place is also important. The State has managed to create an educational environment that resembles the composition of the Malaysian community in the IPTA (De Micheaux 1997, p.5). It is believed that this allows students to learn living in an environment that reflects the real society before they graduate. Via the quota system, and later the merit system, the composition of the IPTA manages to portray the composition of the Malaysian community. Such composition of educational environment allows hidden curriculum to manifest. This manifestation could be more obvious in an education institution that is made up of mainly one ethnic race. At the same time, it is equally

intriguing if an education institution that is dominated by one ethnicity could contribute to nation-building.

Similarly, the instructors' points of view on media education are not impartial. In other words, the approaches of understanding the media by the instructors need to be re-evaluated. It is important to understand how those who design and carry out the curricular in media education deal and feel about issues of media education and nation-building. Generally, instructors in Malaysia are expected to be noble and committed to upholding the aspirations of the nation (Hazri et al. 2011, p.88). Thus, instructors are expected to abide by the policies that are made at the management level, and the perceptions and opinions of the instructors are usually ignored or rarely acknowledged. However, their perspectives and opinions of what media education and nation-building are have great influence over how they would approach the course they are assigned to. It becomes more crucial when they are teaching in an environment that is filled with students from one particular ethnic group. In Malaysia's IPTA, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TAR College) are filled with Malay-Bumiputera and Chinese students respectively. Unlike other IPTA, these two institutions have extreme population compositions. Instructors teaching in these IPTA could be subjected to racial pressure that exists due to the students' composition. However, such conditions are often overlooked and taken for granted. TAR College, for example, is allowed to use English as the medium of instruction as the students are taking foreign professional examinations. At times, the setting up of TAR College in 1969 was seen as a political strategy of the government to restore the public confidence in MCA and indirectly to garner support for the government (Crouch 1996, p.162). This was because earlier

effort by the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Dong Jiao Zong to set up Merdeka University were rejected by the government (Heng 1997, p.278). The government rejected the idea claiming that Merdeka University would defeat the purpose of the government to achieve a united nation. Furthermore, Merdeka University would be set up by the private sector, using Mandarin as the medium of instruction and would cater mainly for students from Chinese medium schools. On the contrary, TAR College was given green lights under quite similar circumstances.

1.2 Research Problems

Full-length studies that specifically focus on the politics of nation-building in post-NEP is hardly found (Mohamed 2002, p.101). This is because issues of nation-building are often related to other sensitive issues; citizenship, the national language, special privileges of Malay-Bumiputera and the natives of North Borneo, and the sovereignty of hereditary Rulers (Shakila 2006, p.33). The labelling of these issues as sensitive has caused a significant reduction in studies on the preferential policy (Thomas 1983, p.164). Since the government informally forbid open studies of such sensitive matters, the understanding on the NEP and other sensitive issues remain vague (Altbach 2001, p.213; Thomas 1983, p.164). Furthermore, the discussion on nation-building that frequently touches upon Malay-Bumiputera issues would make some feel uncomfortable to talk about it. Instead, studies that focus on the implementation of the NEP and ways to improve on the implementation strategies grew. Following this, investigations on nation-building in IPTA that take into account these sensitive issues are scarce. This study perceives that the oppression of the State has affected the movement to study into areas of education, nation-building and sensitive issues. If such oppression is legitimised with the reduction of studies

that question the status quo and hegemony of the dominant groups, it would prolong the inequality that is produced by the existing social order. Studies that attempt to suggest critical contribution of the media towards nation-building are unlikely due to the lack of critical awareness adopted by media education curriculum. Therefore, studies that take the effort to study nation-building issues become more significant.

At the same time, a lot of studies on nation-building in Malaysia adopted a functionalist approach. Generally, functionalism does not take into account the issues of inequality in the society. These inequalities are taken as natural and unavoidable. In order for changes to happen, the people in the society have to make use of the opportunities that is available in the society (Scottish Further Education Unit 2006, p.24). In other words, functionalist approach towards issues that take place in the society indirectly justifies inequality as an acceptable phenomenon. Functionalism downplays issues like race, social class and gender. It sees the society as operating in a system which is in balance and people are competing among each other on a level playing field (Scottish Further Education Unit 2006, p.24). Only the fittest and most deserving would win the competition. Here, the society is taken to be operating in a merit based system. Functionalism fails to take the inequities in the society into consideration (Dunn 2010, p.4). In the context of nation-building, functionalism understands nation-building policies and strategies to be operating in a meritocratic system.

In the context of Malaysia, the functionalist approach fails to consider the political, cultural, sociological and economic nature that are taking place within the society. Owing to the historical background of Malaysia, the overall mechanism in

Malaysia is not equal in nature. These aspects need to be considered to fully understand the education system and nation-building process in Malaysia. A better approach that considers inequalities that exist in the society is conflict theory (Dunn 2010, p.1). Conflict theory perceives that the resources in the society are limited. These resources are important in order to maintain the desired interest and power of a small number of people in the society (Wilson 2011; Collins 1971, p.1009). Those who are in power would try their best to maintain the advantage that they have in this unequal distribution of resources and would use various devices to legitimise the social, economic, cultural and political ideal of the dominant groups. Even though conflict theory is better in explaining the relationship between nation-building and media education in Malaysia, it is rarely used. The different aspects of inequality that conflict theory highlights are deemed sensitive in the Malaysian context and would usually be avoided. Owing to this, studies that take the effort to understand nation-building and media education by utilising conflict theory become more substantial. Conflict theory is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Also, studies of nation-building that focus on Malaysia have the tendency to understand how different devices in the society can be utilised in order to achieve the desired outcome. Including the media, other devices that have been looked into include education (Abu, Norlidah and Saedah 2013; Malakolunthu and Rengasamy 2012; Mohd Ridhuan, Ong and Wan Norhasniah 2012; Cheah 2003), language (Alis 2013; Thock 2009, Awang 2003), religion (Rusnak 2012; Hamayotsu 2002), and technology (Reybold 1994). However, studies that centre on the instructors are very few. Most studies of media education in Malaysia observe the media and communication skills in media education are due to the development of the media

industry. This approach sees media education as a process that generates the necessary manpower for the economy. In this context, the ability of media programmes to provide necessary skill training and facilities becomes crucial. An earlier report by Mohd Hamdan (1988) to compare the various media programmes that were available in Malaysia displayed the assumptions on the importance of training of media personnel for the industry and job opportunities. Another comprehensive study on media education was conducted by the Council for Heads of Communication Studies (COHECS) in 2010. The study began with the assumption that education is to serve the industry and the State. The study stressed the importance of viewpoints from the media industry players while paying less attention to the instructors' opinions. Other studies look into media literacy (Prasad and Shanthi 2012; Prasad, Rao and Mohd. Zain 2012), demystifying the media (Zaharom 2003a, Shanthi 1997), and liberating and developing the society (Mustafa 2005a). It is noticeable that opinions by media instructors do not exist in the study of nation-building and media education. In Malaysia, the study on opinions of media instructors on the relationship of nation-building and media education is not found. While media and media education are said to be important platforms of nation-building, instructors who handle and guide future media practitioners are not given the necessary attention. This aspect is important as how instructors define teaching and the existence of power and privileges have a lot to do with teaching (Neito 2006). In other words, media instructors' perceptions and opinions on teaching and society have great influence over the way they would handle the courses that they are assigned to. Thus, their opinions should be given attention.

Another aspect that is equally important in understanding media education and nation-building is the issue of diversity in the education institutions. Malaysia is made up by three main ethnic group; the Malays, Chinese and Indians. Yet, each ethnic group in Malaysia is able to maintain their traditional culture and norms (Fakhri 2012). Thus, to achieve a significant degree of understanding and tolerance, education becomes one of the platforms where citizens of Malaysia of different cultures and norms can come together and interact (Choong 2008). Studies have shown that diversity in primary and secondary education institution does promote tolerance and understanding among the different ethnic groups, (Ahmad et al. 2011; Vishalache 2009), and specific classroom activity can also be used to enhance this tolerance and understanding (Badrul 2006). In other words, both diversification and specific courses are important in the understanding of nation-building. In IPTA, the issue of diversification and programmes offered and its relationship towards nation-building is not fully studied. After the May 13, 1969 incident, the composition of the population in IPTA is controlled so that it resembles the general composition of the society. One of the reasons for such control is to let the students experience living in a multi-cultural society before they embark into the industry. Studies have shown that diversity among students contributes positively towards the preparation of students for the challenges of diversity in a multicultural Malaysia (Abdus 2014; Ramlee et al. 2009). However, the issue of nation-building in IPTA that are not diverse or where the students are from the majority of one ethnic group is not given necessary attention. There are two IPTA where the population of the students are not diverse; UiTM and TAR College. The claims that such institutions are weakening nation-building effort and tolerance among the people are never really understood.

The nation-building process in Malaysia is complicated due to its historical background and the plurality nature of its population. In order to attain the desired spirit of nation-building, the media are often utilised. The proper use of the media depends greatly on the training that media instructors have provided to the future media personnel. At the same time, the environment that the media personnel received his education is equally important. All the elements that contribute to the understanding of the nation-building in Malaysia should be comprehended via conflict theory. A critical study that intends to understand nation-building in Malaysia should consider the media, the media instructors, and the environment where one receives the media training. However, studies that accommodate these elements have never done.

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of the study is to analyse and evaluate the experience of media instructors in TAR College on teaching media related programmes, and their opinions on the formation of nation-building in TAR College that is dominated primarily by Chinese students in the context of conflict theory. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are conducted in order to obtain and gather the opinions of media instructors. Nineteen semi-structured in-depth interviews are conducted with the instructors from the Division of Mass Communication of the School of Social Science and Humanities, TAR College in Kuala Lumpur. The instructors' opinions and perspectives on media education and nation-building are reviewed and analysed. The opinions of the instructors on media education in TAR College, its education direction and motivating changing factors are also highlighted. Instructors are interviewed on their opinions of the current state of nation-building in Malaysia. At

the same time, the study incorporates Bumiputera factor in its interviews and analysis as nation-building strategy in Malaysia is strongly associated with Bumiputera issues, The opinions from four media industry players, two college officials and 10 students are also gathered in order to triangulate the media instructors' opinions. The learning outcomes and final examination questions of the media programmes are studied as well.

1.4 Research Questions

To better guide this study, the following research questions are formulated:

- i. How do media programmes instructors in TAR College describe nation-building and media education within the boundaries of their field?
- ii. What assumptions do media programmes instructors in TAR College hold about nation-building and teaching media related programmes in an environment that are filled with majority Chinese students?
- iii. How are the opinions and assumptions of media programmes instructors in TAR College being explained within the context of conflict theory of education?

1.5 Significance of the Study

In a pluralistic society, the lack of understanding on nation-building can lead to the existence of racial tensions in Malaysia and higher education institutions in Malaysia have not successfully addressed the situation (Wan Mohd. Nor 2014). The reduction and lack of studies on nation-building that touch on important issues on nation-building further weakens the understanding of nation-building for the pluralistic society. Without proper study on issues related to nation-building, racial tensions

that exist in Malaysia would not be properly addressed (Khairul, Ong and Ahmad 2015). Over the years, especially after the 13th May incident, the understanding of issues related to nation-building becomes more important, yet they are avoided. Therefore, the findings of this study could give a new glimpse into what issues are considered as important in the understanding of nation-building and what need to be addressed as soon as possible to address the issue. The findings of this study could be used for further investigation into nation-building issues. Besides, the utilisation of conflict theory in this study also allows the reappraisal of the contribution of various devices in the process of nation-building, especially media education and the instructors. This is important as conflict theory takes into account the social inequality that exists in the society and identifies the values that the dominant groups try to realise (Burchill and Linklater 2005). Thus, media education and media instructors should not be understood without considering the existence of social inequality. The understanding as proposed by conflict theory can enhance better understanding of nation-building not only in Malaysia but also towards any society that is pluralistic in nature. Therefore, it is anticipated that this study would generate a great deal of interest, not only among media instructors and media instructors but also among the general public that intended to understand media education, media instructors and nation-building via the perspective of conflict theory.

Saying that, the findings of this study can also be beneficial for the understanding of media instructors on their priorities while teaching and how these priorities are translated into their teaching pedagogy. Media instructors do not usually receive formal training on education and their knowledge of education is based on their experiences and developments in while teaching. In other words,

there is a great chance their teaching is influenced by social, cultural, economic and political background. Furthermore, effective teaching depends on the behaviours, knowledge and understanding, and the beliefs of the educator (Husbands and Pearce 2012). Thus, the findings of the study can be used to stress the importance of understanding the differences among the instructors and their teaching pedagogies. By describing the perspectives and opinions on nation-building of instructors who teach media related programmes in an institution that is filled with Chinese students, this study can contribute to creating a body of knowledge useful to educational institutions, instructors and others who teach media related programmes. Armed with the findings of this study, instructors would be able to better understand themselves as educators rather than just information relayers. Other than the State, instructors should be aware that the media industry players are also one of the dominant groups that might regulate the knowledge made available in the education institutions. Higher education cannot distance itself from the society, yet at the same time should not be too enthusiastic with issues happening outside.

Higher education institutions are an important part of - and play an important role in - society. The institutions are societies unto themselves, but they are also part of the larger society. If they remained only societies unto themselves, higher education institutions would be locked up in the proverbial ivory tower and their future would most likely be considerably shorter than their past. On the other hand, higher education institutions without some distance from society at large would run a serious risk of losing their capacity to reason in terms of principle, to take a long-term view somewhat detached from the immediate issues of the day and to identify sustainable solutions to the most serious and long-term challenges facing our society (Bergan 2003).

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an outline and a brief introduction to the study. The study is designed to critically explain how instructors teaching media related programmes in TAR College had responded to the nation-building strategies of the State and their views on media education. This study is based on conflict theory that sees media

education operates in unequal social, economic, cultural and political conditions. Chapter 2 discusses what conflict theory is and how it is relevant to the Malaysian society in general. It also highlights what a nation is, and how the nationalism and nation-building of Malaysia arise from it. Chapter 3 illustrates a brief discussion on education in Malaysia and focuses on the background of tertiary education in Malaysia, media education in Malaysia, and also discusses how education in Malaysia is an arena of conflict between several parties. Chapter 4 looks into the philosophical assumptions of this study and the process of information gathering. Chapter 5 addresses the first two research questions that guided this study by examining the opinions and assumptions on media education and nation-building of the instructors. Chapter 6 addresses the third research question that examines media instructors' opinions on media education and nation-building by utilising conflict theory. Chapter 7 summarises the study by highlighting the significant findings of the study and makes suggestions for future studies that intended to study media education, nation-building and media instructors.

Chapter 2

General Background and Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses what conflict theory is and how it is relevant to the Malaysian society in general. This chapter begins by highlighting conflict theory as perceived by Karl Marx and Max Weber where they stress the important roles that economy, status and power in any conflict that occurs in a society. The chapter also discusses conflict theory in the context of Malaysia society. This is done by separating the society into three periods of time; before, during and after the intervention of the British Colonial Administration (BCA) in Malaysia. During these periods, conflicts happened between the Malay ruling class and commoners, the Malay ruling class and the BCA, and finally between the Malays and non-Malays. This chapter also highlights that conflicts usually happened due to economic, status and power purposes. The final part of this chapter discusses what a nation is, and how the nationalism and nation-building of Malaysia arise from it.

2.1 Conflict Theory

Conflict theory is used to understand the larger social, national, regional or global levels of sociological phenomena by explaining how conflict starts, varies and affects the society (Allan 2007, p.71). As resources are limited and scarce, competition arises among different groups and this leads to inequality in the society (Henslin 2003, p.30). Other than the unequal distribution of scarce resources, every society also displays patterns of group benefits and deprivations (Allan 2007, p.72). Certain group tends to believe its class is superior to other classes. Domination and exploitation would take place in order for that group to gain social, economic, cultural and political advantages. The wealthier class would usually win the

competition, and in the long term, this position enables them to increase their wealth at the expense of the economically poor population. In other words, conflict theory is interested in understanding how groups become politically active, who holds the power in the society and what are the patterns of deprivation (Allan 2007, p.72).

The initial statement of conflict theory was brought forward by Karl Marx. Marx's thinking is driven by the ideas of species-being and material dialectic (Allan 2007, p.70). The notion of species-being understands that basic human nature is defined by production and all true ideas are materially based (Dyer-Witthford 2008, p.2; Allan 2007, p.70). Humans create their own world and they see their existence through the products that they produce.

Their entire world was intimately connected. They saw themselves purely in every product. Or, if they had bartered for something, then they saw an immediate social relationship with the person who had made the thing. When they looked into the world they had produced, they saw themselves; they saw a clear picture of themselves as being human (creative producers) (Allan 2007, p.66).

Therefore, it is through production that one can understand human nature. However, present conditions and production structures that stress job specialisations have distorted this understanding of human nature. The notion of material dialectic sees that it is the economic structure that moves history and influences our inner person (Iglesias 2014, p.2; Allan 2007, p.71). Dialectic contains elements that are naturally antagonistic to one another. An existing generally accepted state or thesis of the society would cause the formation of a reaction or anti-thesis that opposed the accepted state. Both thesis and anti-thesis cannot coexist and a compromise or synthesis would eventually be obtained to resolve existing tension. The newly formed compromise, however, is only temporary measure, as the synthesis itself would eventually evolve to become a thesis in its own rights. With this, the whole